

To: StClair, Christie[StClair.Christie@epa.gov]
Cc: Harrison, Melissa[Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov]
From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Wed 10/14/2015 7:12:22 PM
Subject: RE: NANCY action - Denver Post: Gold King mine water treatment

I am good with this .. thanks ng

From: StClair, Christie
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 2:59 PM
To: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Cc: Harrison, Melissa <Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: NANCY action - Denver Post: Gold King mine water treatment

Sorry to be a pest, but is it okay to share give AP and Denver Post the following info on the treatment plant?

All the major components for the water treatment plant are now on-site. Pipe has been run from the Gold King Mine treatment ponds down to the Gladstone site. We are now connecting all the components, and anticipate that water will start flowing on Friday. It will then take about a week to fully adjust the treatment system for optimal performance. The system will remove total and dissolved metals between 95% and 99%, and discharge water with a neutral pH.

As background, please keep in mind that the water treatment plant is addressing only discharge from Gold King Mine. It will make some improvement in water quality in Cement Creek, but is not intended to be a solution to the broader problem of discharging mine in the Upper Animas. Mines in the area have been releasing contaminated mine wastewater into the environment for decades, and addressing the situation is a complicated problem. (The Red and Bonita Mine, for example, continues to discharge at 350 gpm directly into Cement Creek.)

It is our understanding that CDPHE is convening a conversation on long-term mitigation strategies, which might include NPL listing. I suggest contacting Monica Desch Sheets, 303-692-3439, Monica.Sheets@state.co.us or Doug Jamison, 303-692-3404, Doug.Jamison@state.co.us for more information.

For additional background on the role of EPA: The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA, better known as Superfund) contains public participation provisions that direct the EPA to engage communities affected by actual and potential Superfund.

Last month, at the request of the local communities, EPA's Region 8 Administrator and the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Assistant Administrator met with representatives from Silverton, Durango, La Plata County, San Juan County, Southern Ute Tribe, and other stakeholders on, to discuss the National Priorities List (NPL) process and possible next steps. Following this meeting, EPA continues to engage in dialogue with all pertinent stakeholders. At this time we haven't received any requests from the governor to propose listing this site on the NPL, which we look for as part of the agency's policy and practice.

Christie St. Clair

Office of Public Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

Washington, DC

o: 202-564-2880

m: 202-768-5780

From: StClair, Christie

Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 2:10 PM

To: Grantham, Nancy

Cc: Harrison, Melissa

Subject: NANCY action - Denver Post: Gold King mine water treatment

Nancy, nobody else weighed in. Ok to send the below info to Jessie, and also to Dan Elliott/AP who just asked the same thing?

Thanks,

Christie

Christie St. Clair

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Washington, DC

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m: 202-768-5780

From: Ostrander, David

Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 12:23 PM

To: StClair, Christie; Stalcup, Dana; Williams, Laura; Deitz, Randy

Cc: Grantham, Nancy; Card, Joan; McGrath, Shaun; Hestmark, Martin; Peterson, Cynthia

Subject: RE: Gold King mine

From: StClair, Christie

Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 10:20 AM

To: Ostrander, David; Stalcup, Dana; Williams, Laura; Deitz, Randy

Cc: Grantham, Nancy; Card, Joan; McGrath, Shaun; Hestmark, Martin; Peterson, Cynthia

Subject: RE: Gold King mine

Thanks, David.

Below is a draft response to send Jesse. I've set it up so that we respond to his question, then provide the additional context as background. (The background info has been approved by OSWER, EOC and OPS and is our current statement on long-term mitigation.)

R8 and OSWER – please let me know if you have any changes.

Thanks,

Christie

All the major components for the water treatment plant are now on-site. Pipe has been run from the Gold King Mine treatment ponds down to the Gladstone site. **[DAVID - Are we also linking R&B into this system? No, we are just using the R&B ponds as part of the piping/delivery system for water from GKM to Gladstone].** We are now connecting all the components, and anticipate that water will start flowing on Friday. It will then take about a week to fully adjust the treatment system for optimal performance. The system will remove total and dissolved metals between 95% and 99%, and discharge water with a neutral pH.

As background, please keep in mind that the water treatment plant is addressing only discharge from Gold King Mine. It will make some improvement in water quality in Cement Creek, but is not intended to be a solution to the broader problem of discharging mine in the Upper Animas. Mines in the area have been releasing contaminated mine wastewater into the environment for decades, and addressing the situation is a complicated problem. (The Red and Bonita Mine, for example, continues to discharge at 350 gpm directly into Cement Creek.)

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From: Ostrander, David

Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 12:02 PM

To: StClair, Christie; Stalcup, Dana; Williams, Laura; Deitz, Randy

Cc: Grantham, Nancy; Card, Joan; McGrath, Shaun; Hestmark, Martin; Peterson, Cynthia

Subject: RE: Gold King mine

All the major components are on-site. Pipe has been run from the mine down to R&B ponds and connections are being made to the Gladstone ponds and to the treatment system. The sub-contractor is connecting all the components together. The plant will start flowing water through on Friday in two days. Over the next week, the treatment system will be adjusted to best treat the water.

We need to think about how we craft this message and manage the expectation. Is it really breaking news that the plant starts operating on Friday? Remember, this flow from the GKM and treatment is only a small part of the overall discharge from mines and will make some improvement in water quality in Cement Creek, but will not, and is not intended to be a solution to the discharging mine problems in the Upper Animas. The R&B continues to discharge at 350 gpm directly into Cement Creek. We were fortunate that we had no weather delays over the last 3 weeks which would have slowed down construction.

Anything I can help with the message?

From: StClair, Christie
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 9:29 AM
To: Ostrander, David; Stalcup, Dana; Williams, Laura; Deitz, Randy
Cc: Grantham, Nancy
Subject: Fwd: Gold King mine

Hi all, what can you tell me about the status of the new treatment plant?

Thanks,

Christie

Christie St. Clair

Office of Public Affairs

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Jesse Paul <jpaul@denverpost.com>
Date: October 14, 2015 at 11:24:11 AM EDT
To: Press <press@epa.gov>
Subject: Gold King mine

Good morning!

I am hoping to confirm the GKM temporary water treatment plant is in place today as planned.

Thanks,

--

Jesse Paul

Breaking News Reporter, The Denver Post

Desk: 303-954-1733

Cell: 302-528-7118

@JesseAPaul